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ABSTRACT

The concept of inherency is an important issue in contemporary academic debate, although little attention has been paid to the underlying rationale behind its use. A review of the literature suggests that one purpose of inherency is to demonstrate that the cause of the problem that the affirmative position isolates is accurately described. A second justification assumes that there is a presumption in favor of the current system, and if the problem can be solved with existing programs, those programs should be used, instead of creating new programs. The justification of permanence argues that inherency is needed to demonstrate that the problem isolated by the affirmative is likely to continue in the future. In addition, inherency allows debaters to determine which parts of a given plan are unique to the resolution and which aspects are non-topical, and it provides a balancing comparison between the negative position and the affirmative plan. Finally, one school thought argues that inherency has developed into an abstraction, and that its main value is as a psychological tool utilizing ambiguity. (KS)

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TOWARDS A JUSTIFICATION OF INHERENCY

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The concept of inherency is an important issue in contemporary academic debate. The requirement than an affirmative team present an inherent need (or inherent advantages) has become nearly universal. Inherency has been discussed with respect to such issues as presumption, repairs and topicality. The way inherency is argued affects the development of many plan attacks. The problem of inherency has also contributed to the development of many of the new affirmative strategies, as well as to the development of new affirmative cases.[1] Clearly, inherency is an issue that warrants serious study.

Despite the importance of inherency, there has been little attention paid to the rationale behind the concept. Often, both theorists and practitioners of debate merely assume that a case must be inherent, and never explain why this is so. Textbooks, for example, rarely provide an explanation for why inherency should be an important issue. Pruett observed:

> In examining the concept of inherency, it is surprising that authors of debate texts spend so little time discussing the meaning of the term. Most treat inherency as a major issue without describing what it entails or to explain what a person must do to make it a functional argument.[2]

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The failure to justify inherency extends beyond the textbooks on debate and into the debate rounds themselves. Participants in debate assume that inherency is an issue that must be won by the affirmative, but never justify this assumption. The formulation of a precise justification for inherency is rarely made in debate rounds. Jones and Flegle point out:

> We have not adequately discussed and debated the underlying theories, rationales, etc. within our own system. This becomes an acute problem when teams differ greatly on the assumptions incorporated into their positions without discussing the values (or impact) of their assumptions in the debate.[3]

The result of both of these trends is that inherency, or at least the justification for inherency has been sadly neglected by the debate community. As Zarefsky argued:

> If the past few years are any indication, inherency will become among the most neglected theoretical concepts, and there will be adverse consequences for the rationality of the argumentative process.[4]

This paper will attempt to partially fill this void by reviewing the literature on inherency, and critically discussing the various justifications that have been advanced for why inherency should be an issue in debate. Six justifications have been offered for inherency: the need to identify the cause of the problem; the need to overcome presumption; the need to demonstrate that the problem isolated is of a permanent nature; the need to locate the link between the advantage and the topical portions of the affirmative plan; the need to balance the affirmative plan's advantages against the advantages of other policy systems; and the psychological effect of inherency.

CAUSALITY

One purpose of inherency is to demonstrate that the cause of the problem the affirmative isolates (or the advantages they claim) is accurately described. This dimention of inherency is sometimes separated from inherency and discussed as an independent concept.[5] The proponents of this position suggest that only be demonstrating that the cause of a problem is linked to the present system can the affirmative team guarantee that its plan will solve the problem. As Zarefsky argues:

> . . . if one were to change the policy only to find that he had not mitigated the reasons [for the problem], his labor would not only go for naught but might also risk the introduction of problems and complications not previously envisioned.[6]

The implications of this justification of inherency is that an affirmative team can meet this burden of inherency in any one of several ways, as long as the affirmative plan does not have the same problem as the current system. The emphasis of this type of inherency justification should be on the solvency of the affirmative plan. Doyle argues: "I'll go along with any concept of inherency if you can show me how your case avoids the same pitfalls."[7]

There have been two major attacks on this justification for inherency. The first attack argues that, in a world of multiple causes, it is almost impossible to demonstrate that the only cause for a problem is the structure that the affirmative alters. To require the affirmative to prove that only one structure is the cause of the problem places an unreasonable burden on the affirmative:

> . . . there is no justification for indicting the affirmative for failure to completely disprove the possibility of multiple causes. It is virtually impossible to show that faults could be corrected and/or advantages gained <u>if and only if</u> the present system is abolished.[8]

Brock, Chesebro, Cragan and Klumpp suggest that one of the results of the multi-causality of problems has been a shift in the meaning of inherency:

> In a world of multi- and feedback causation where traditional inherency can be difficult, if not impossible, to establish, the focus of inherency has shifted from conditions to policy. Today one asks if the characteristics of present circumstances are such that present policies cannot madify them adequately.[9]

The implication of this concept is that the use of inherency as being required to demonstrate causality is not as strong now as it was formerly.

The second indictment of the causality justification for inherency is that it is not always necessary to isolate the cause of a problem in order to solve the problem. Marsh[10] gives the example of hay fever, where medical science does not have to know the cause of the illness to eliminate the symptoms. Newman[11] gives the example of foreign aid. We may not know why a program fails, or why it creates animosity; as long as we know that by eliminating the program, certain benefits come about, no isolation of the causes must be shown. Kruger argues, however, that the risks to solving a problem without knowing the cause are great:

> Failure to get at the <u>root</u> cause in order to eliminate an undesirable effect is generally unsatisfactory for two reasons: 1. treatment of an intermediate cause . . . is usually temporary; in the case of the bad tooth, the receptor is only temporarily immobilized by the drug; thus the effect (pain) recurs intermittently; 2. damage is still being done by the root cause.[12]

By allowing the real cause to continue unchecked, the end result may be an even greater harm than the harm that was first noticed by the affirmative. The essence of the proponents of this justification for inherency is that a case must locate the cause of a problem before the specific method of attacking the problem should be chosen.

PRESUMPTION

The second justification for inherency suggests that there is a presumption in favor of the current system, and if a problem can be solved with existing programs, those programs should be used, rather than creating new programs. The concept of presumption goes back to Richard Whately. In 1828, he suggested that:

> There is a presumption in favour of every existing institution. . . . the "burden of proof" lies with him who proposes an alteration; simply, on the ground that since change is not a good in itself, he who demands a change should show cause for it.[13]

The concept of presumption was used as early as 1917 by debate theoreticians,[14] ans many writers suggested that the negative may just defend existing institutions due to the presumption which belongs to the present system:

> There is the position which says, 'yes, there are some things wrong with the status quo, but they do not call for a basic change, they can be repaied by these minor changes . . .' This is a very realistic position, and capitalizes on the presumption: most people admit that the world is not perfect and could stand a few changes, even though it is basically sound.[15]

Inherency would require the affirmative team to demonstrate that the problem they isolate cannot be solved with the existing structures. This is probably the most prevalent view of inherency amoung practitioners of advocacy.

There are some who disagree with the placing of presumption with the present system. Marsh argues that:

> Since presumptions are inferential rather than factual, since they are arbitrary rather than demonstrable, such conclusions should be debated and not merely assumed.[16]

Zarefsky suggests that the concept of presumption is needed to determine who initiates the controversy, to set out the responsibilities of the advocates, and to settle a tie.[17] He argues that the presumption in a round should not be in favor of the present system, but rather should be against the resolution, as is the case in testing a hypothesis. The presumption for the present system, according to Zarefsky, is arbitrary, and there is much evidence to suggest that there is an equal, if not greater presumption in favor of change.[18] Viewing debate as the testing of a hypothesis (and thus placing presumption as being against the resolution) would allow for a more rational placement of presumption.[19]

Kruger argues, however, that there are legitimate reasons for presumption to be with the present system:

> The first circumstance which favors the retention of the status quo is the status quo's degree of effectiveness. . . . . The second circumstance which favors the retention of the status quo is that major changes entail consequences which the advocate of change, or the affirmative, can only speculate about or predict, whereas consequences under the status quo are known or verifiable.[20]

The presumption lies with the known, as opposed to the unknown. Unger takes a third course, by suggesting that presumption lies with the system that entails the least risk of the unknown, i.e., the system that we know the most about. This could be either the current system or the plan of the affirmative, depending

upon the specifics of each.[21] The common denominator of all of these theories is that the negative can alter current programs and, if the alteration produces the affirmative advantage, win the debate. Before the affirmative can overcome presumption, the affirmative must demonstrate that its case is inherent. The key to this justification of inherency is that the negative team is given leeway in what it can advocate, while still mainaining presumption.

PERMANENCE

The third justification for inherency is permanence. This school of inherency argues that inherency is needed to demonstrate that the problem the affirmative isolates is likely to continue in the future. Inherency "explains why the S.Q. [status quo] cannot solve the problem tomorrow."[22] Only be demonstrating an inherent need can the affirmative prove a continuing advantage:

> . . . the affirmative must show that the present system is beset with various inherent evils . . . It must be shown that the alleged evils are inherent within the present system, not temporary, not incidental.[23]

An inherent condition, then, is one that is likely to continue in the future.

The justification of permanence is most often raised in the discussion of attitudinal inherency. Judges often require an affirmative team that suggests that attitudes are the cause of a problem to demonstrate that the attitudes will be permanent. Hannah requires that affirmatives show "the attitudes are not likely to change."[24] Miller accepts attitudinal inherency if "the affirmative demonstrates probability and a rationale for continued maintenance of attitudes,"[25] and Gilchrist suggests:

> Attitudinal inherency should have some structural basis which leads to the conclusion that the attitude is inherent, likely to persist, and resistant to change. The ability of industries to withhold information and influence decisions of regulatory agencies is an example of a structural basis for attitudes.[26]

This school of thought would argue that only if a problem is likely to persist over a long period of time should the structure be altered. Inherency helps establish the permanence of the problem.

TOPICALITY

Most judges require that the advantage of any affirmative case comes from the resolution, not from non-topical planks of the affirmative plan:

> . . . a comparative advantage case meets all the requirements of inherency by showing that all its advantages flow from the elimination of the present system, not from extraneous factors.[27]

According to proponents of this theory of inherency, inherency allows the debaters to isolate those parts of the plan that are unique to the resolution and those parts of the plan that are non-topical, and to determine which section of the plan creates the advantage:

> What is required for a determination of 'inherency' is to decide what is the <u>essence</u> of the present system, and whether that essence must be changed to achieve the goals of the proposal.[28]

For example, if the only barrier facing current programs is that they are not adequately funded, then the affirmative advantage comes from increased funding, not the resolution. Again, if the advantage comes from the personnel in the affirmative plan, then it is arguable that the advantage would flow from a non-resolutional portion of the plan, and thus would be extra-topical. Goodman

offers an exception to this last example: if the affirmative can systematically insure better personnel, then the advantage would not be extratopical, since it would come from the structure that selects personnel, not the personnel per se.[29] Inherency thus involves "Whether the failure of the policy is related to the particular phase of the status quo which the debate resolution proposes to change."[30] The topicality justification of inherency stresses which part of the plan produces the advantage.

BALANCING

The fifth justification for inherency is the balancing justification. This position is held, to one degree or another, by most judges who view themselves as policy makers. This view sees debate as the weighing of two or more competing systems. Inherency attacks are used to minimize the affirmative advantage. The negative team would argue that, if the affirmative advantage can be gained through a superior alternate policy, that choice should be made. The emphasis is on using minor repairs of the present system to create a desirable alternative to the affirmative plan:

> The negative may argue alternatively that repairs of the present system or a counterplan of some form will gain the advantages of the affirmative policy option with additional advantages (or without the accompanying disadvantages). The negative may not clearly and completely outline a policy option embodied in their inherency/uniqueness arguments . . . but modifications of the present system are introduced and defended in the negative position [and] compose the policy option.[31]

The emphasis of this justification is the comparison between the negative position and the affirmative plan. Inherency is

seen as a method of altering current programs in a non-resolutional manner in order to create a policy that is superior to the affirmative plan. Inherency flows from the comparison of the two systems.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TOOL

Reflecting on the wide range of views on inherency, as well as the failure of many authors to give any rationale for the concept, the sixth view of inherency suggests that the concept of inherency has developed into an abstract term that has little relevance outside the debate world. Sanders observes that, "in many cases, if you accepted the negative interpretation of inherency, it would be impossible for the affirmative to win a debate."[32] This school argues that inherency has become so vague and ambiguous that its main value is its ambiguity:

> In such a situation, the term 'inherency' evokes awe. As the chasm between the term and the multiple meanings it suggests has widened, the audience has begun to focus not on the tests of reasoning suggested by the word, but rather on the term itself. Suppose that a negative speaker pleads that the affirmative 'hasn't shown an inherent need.' Since the term is ambiguous, the force of the charge depends less on arguments and more on the invocation of the ritual term, inherency. The word itself develops argumentative value.[33]

The effect of this is that inherency tends to simplify the arguments used in a round. The use of inherency in any given round may have little relationship to the logical basis for the argument.[34] Debate becomes a game, and one of the rules of the game is that inherency must be established, whether or not there is a logical reason for that requirement.

This view of inherency views this trend as being an undesirable one. When debaters are unaware of the rationale for inherency, however, it is inevitable. Only when judges force debaters to go beyond the mere mentioning of the word "inherency" and require that they also present the reasons why the specific case being debated must be inherent in terms of causality, presumption, permanence, topicality, or balancing will this final use of inherency be eliminated.

NOTES

[1]Tom Coodnight, Bill Balthrop, and Donn W. Parson, "The Problem of Inherency: Strategy and Substance," Journal of the American Forensic Association X (Spring, 1974), 229-230.

[2]Robert E. Pruett, "The Issue of Inherency," Forensic LV (March, 1970), p. 9.

[3]Ben Jones and Jim Flegle, "Conflicting Assumptions of Modern Debate: A Classic Example," Speaker and Gavel XI (March, 1974), 70.

[4]David Zarefsky, "Changing Concepts in Forensics," Paper presented at the 60th annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Chicago, Illinois, December 29, 1974, p. 3.

[5]See, for example, James J. Unger and James M. Copeland, Second Thoughts on the Question of Poverty in the United States (Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Corporation, 1973), pp. 4-10.

[6]David Zarefsky, The Comparative Advantage Case (Evanston: Illinois: Championship Debate Enterprises, 1970), p. 1.

[7]Philip M. Doyle, in the American Forensic Association Booklet of Judges, Twenty-eigth Annual National Debate Tournament, April 19-22, 1974, (n.p.).

[8]John Derebery, "Another look at 'Inherency'," Rostrum XLII (December, 1967), 9.

[9]Bernard L. Brock, James Chesebro, John F. Cragan, and James F. Klumpp, Public Policy Decision Making: Systems Analysis and Comparative Advantages Debate (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1973, p. 156.

[10]Patrick O. Marsh, "Is Debate Merely a Game for Conservative Players?" Speaker and Gavel I (January, 1965), 50.

[11]Robert P. Newman, "The Inherent and Compelling Need," Journal of the American Forensic Association II (May, 1965), 69.

[12]Arthur N. Kruger, "The Underlying Assumptions of Policy Questions: III. Inherent Evil," Speaker and Gavel II (March, 1965), 80.

[13]Richard Whately, "Elements of Rhetoric," in The Rhetoric of Blair, Campbell and Whately, edited by James L. Golden and Edward P. J. Corbett (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), p. 344.

[14]James Milton O'Neill, Craven Laycok, and Robert Leighton Scales, Argumentation and Debate (New York: MacMillan Company, 1917), pp. 33-41.

[15]Robert P. Newman, "Principles of Case Construction," Rostrum XXXV (December, 1960), 7.

[16]Marsh, p. 48.

[17]David Zarefsky, "A Reformulation of the Concept of Presumption," Paper presented at the Central States Speech Association Convention, Chicago, Illinois, April 7, 1973, pp. 1-2.

[18]Ibid., p. 4.

[19]Ibid., p. 5.

[20]Arthur N. Kruger, "The Underlying Assumptions of Policy Questions: I Presumption and Burden of Proof," Speaker and Gavel I (November, 1964), 16.

[21]James J. Unger, in the American Forensic Association, Booklet of Judges, Twenty-ninth Annual National Debate Tournament, April 18-21, 1975, p. 66.

[22]James R. Myers, Ibid., p. 75.

[23]A. Westley Rowland and Wayne C, Eubank, "Organizing the Case," in Argumentation and Debate, edited by David Potter (New York: Dryden, 1954), p. 65.

[24]Larry K. Hannah, Booklet of Judges, 1974, (n.p.).

[25]Dan L. Miller, Booklet of Judges, 1975, p. 10.

[26]Jim Gilchrist, Ibid., p. 55.

[27]William Stewart and Paul Kruper, "Toward a Recognition of Inherency," Rostrum XLII (February, 1967), 4.

[28]David Zarefsky, "The 'Traditional case' - 'Comparative Advantage Case' Dichotomy: Another Look," Journal of the American Forensic Association VI (Winter, 1969), 13.

[29]Geoff Goodman, Booklet of Judges, 1975, p. 7.

[30]Pruett, p. 9.

[31]James F. Klumpp, "Debate as a Paradigm for Comparing Alternative Policy Options," Paper presented at the 60th Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Chicago, Illinois, December 29, 1974, p. 4.

[32]Gerald Sanders, Booklet of Judges, 1974, (n.p.).

[33]Dereberry, p. 10.

[34]Ibid.